

# The U-2 Affair: How Words 'Our Boy Isn't There' Started Cover-Up Machinery Working in U.S.

STAT

Phone Delays and Absence of High Officials Slowed Decisions.

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This is the third installment of a condensation of the book "The U-2 Affair" which tells the story behind American espionage flights over the Soviet Union.

## Chapter III.

### MAY DAY

ON A QUIET, tree-lined street in Georgetown, Washington's most fashionable residential section, a telephone rang at 11:15 a.m., the first of May, in the home of Hugh S. Cumming Jr., chief of intelligence and research of the United States Department of State. A maid answered.

Because it was Sunday, Cumming, a distinguished, white-haired member of one of Virginia's oldest families, was in church.

Not until he returned to his home on O street shortly after noon did Cumming learn that a man had called and was urgently trying to reach him. From the name, Cumming knew what it might be; the caller was his CIA contact for the U-2 operation.

The Cumming's coal-black dachshund, Gretchen, watched as her master dialed.

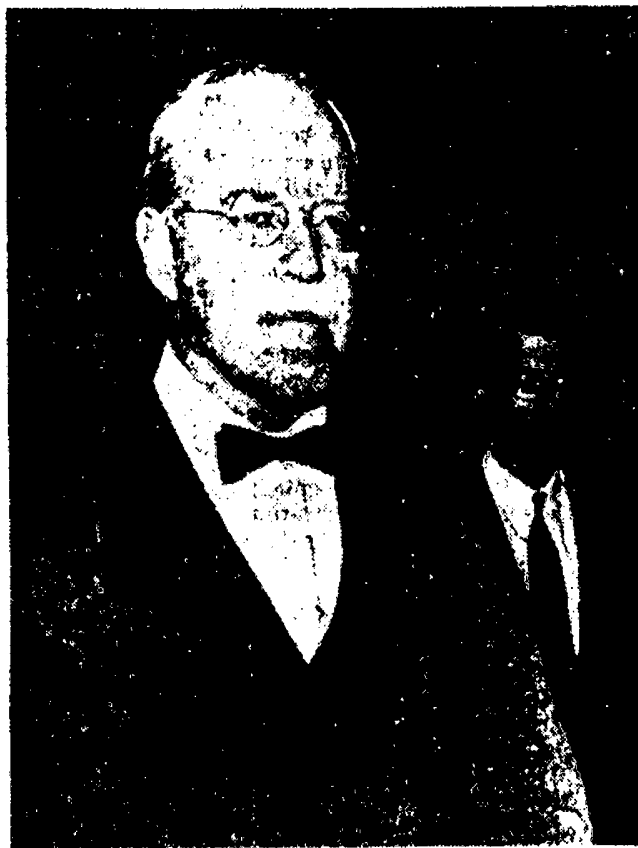
"Our boy isn't there," the voice at the other end of the line said carefully. "We don't know what happened to him." Although the conversation would have been meaningless to anyone else, its import was clearly clear to Cumming:

THE U-2 WAS OVERDUE at 11:00 a.m. It was presumed down, somewhere in the Soviet Union. The fate of the plane was unknown. Cumming had been the first official of the State Department notified by the CIA.

Allen Dulles did not yet know. He was, on Sunday morning, in the ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City, receiving the Golden Rule Award.

For the moment, at least, Cumming was the official who had to act.

Although his name was unknown to the general public, Cumming was one of a handful of men at the State Department



ALLEN DULLES, then director of the Central Intelligence Agency, arriving at the Capitol in May 1960 to give congressional leaders a report on the U-2 affair.

the failure of the U-2 flight—but whom could he tell?

The U-2 overflights were, in the language of the intelligence world, so "black" that communications among the small group of men who ran the program was mostly by word of mouth. At the State Department, among those few officials who knew were Secretary Herter and Douglas Dillon, the urbane Under Secretary.

But Herter was in Istanbul. And Dillon was away, or so Cumming believed. He decided to check further, however, and was relieved to discover that Dillon had in fact returned. He immediately telephoned him at his home. Both men realized they were talking over a non-secure, ordinary phone line. Although they spoke in guarded fashion, they reached an important decision.

SINCE MID-1954, when U-2s began overflying the Soviet Union, the CIA had ready prepackaged "cover" stories to suit the circumstances and the geography. These were innocuous, short statements to be

plucked out of the files and issued by Air Force public information officers at local bases if and when a U-2 failed to come back from a secret mission.

Both Dillon and Cumming knew that the prepared cover story for the May 1 flight said that a weather plane had taken off from Turkey—and without authorization—wandered over Pakistan. For diplomatic reasons, the two men now agreed that any mention of Pakistan, the real jumping-off point for the flight, would have to be dropped out of the cover story that would soon be issued to the world.

Cumming was instructed to argue this view at a top-secret CIA meeting being held that afternoon.

Dulles, after delivering the speech in New York, flew back to the capital. He did not learn that the U-2 was missing until he arrived at his home in Georgetown, between 2 and 3 p.m.

By this time the CIA had notified Cumming, the Pentagon, and the White House. Brig. Gen. Andrew J. Goodpaster, White House secretary, passed

Strategy Plan Is Likened to a Fog-bound Ship on Collision Course.

the word along to President Eisenhower at Camp David.

ALL THIS, of course, was going on behind the scenes. The public knew nothing yet.

And not even the highest officials in Washington, including Dulles, Dillon and Cumming, had any way of learning the fate of the dark plane with the outsized wings or of its 33-year-old pilot.

As the day wore on, other high officials were alerted by CIA. The intelligence agency had received the news from halfway around the world over its own protected communications network, after agents at Bodo, Incirlik and Peshawar realized there was no longer even a slim hope that Powers would come gliding in to the airfield at the tiny fishing village on the Norwegian sea.

Besides Dulles, Cumming and Dillon, the Secretary of Defense, Thomas S. Gates Jr., was notified that the U-2 was overdue. So was Dr. Hugh L. Dryden, deputy administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, a scholarly scientist with snowy hair, thick bifocals, and a precise manner.

Much later, fanciful tales were to circulate on the Washington cocktail circuit that CIA had brilliantly deceived NASA into believing the U-2 flew only "weather" missions. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dryden had in fact willingly allowed NASA and its precursor agency, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, to be used as the CIA's cover from the very start of the project. He felt it his patriotic duty, and had no regrets about it later.

IN GEORGETOWN, the early afternoon sun was breaking through the overcast as Cumming drove to the CIA meeting that would shape the precise language of the cover story. He headed for the building in downtown Washington where Powers's flight progress had been plotted.

The exact location of this building is classified information.

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